Memories of Lee Lawson Scott

These memories were written down by Lee at various times through his life.

"My earliest memory goes back to when my brother older than me (William) cut my finger with an axe. We were playing together, it must have been in Poplar Grove, that was about 8th West in Salt Lake. We had a piece of old quilt. William wanted to cut it and I didn't want him to. I grabbed for it just as he swung the axe and he caught my finger. I still have the scar. He must have died about that time because the only thing I can remember about him other than that was seeing him in the coffin the day of the funeral. He was three years older than me." [William was born in June 3, 1903 and died on February 12, 1910, so he would have been about six and a half years old.

"There used to be a Soda Pop plant next to our place. Mom used to tie me up to keep me from running away. Someone used to stick the neck of a pop bottle through a knot in the fence and watch me drink out of the bottle.

I remember my oldest brother (Milton) taking me to a baseball game in that same locality. I remember Grandpa Miles (Granderson Lee Miles) moving us to Bingham Canyon about that time. The wagons and horses splashed mud all over the yard and windows when it rained. Dad worked in the smelter and blacksmith shop. He loved to shoe horses and was an expert blacksmith.

I don't remember moving back to 14th south and 2nd west. It is now 33rd south and 2nd west. That is where I saw my first and only flying saucer. The sky was clear and for several nights there was a bright light in the sky. Everyone was excited about it. It turned out that a couple of young fellows built themselves a box kite. After it got dark, they lita lantern and put it in the kite and sent it aloft. They got results. It was the talk of the town for awhile.

The Church built what they called the 14th South Tabernacle. It had a rounding dome on it. They gave away buttons with a picture of the tabernacle on it. I kept my button for years. I don't know what finally happened to it. I remember going with Mother to Stake Conference once in that building. It was east of State Street and north of 14th South.

I started school. I can't remember the name of the school; it was about 1st West and 14th South. I remember riding the street cars. As I remember, they had no glass in the side windows, just a kind of blind that you could pull down and back where you wanted them. I know when it rained the horses big feet could sure splash mud in the street car. Most of the roads were not tarred, that is what they used to surface the roads with then.

I used to go to religion class after school. One day, the folding chair I was on was shoved from behind or something happened. The chair folded up and took off a thumb nail for me.

I spent a lot of time in bed in the summer. They said that I had a leakage of the heart. When my Grandma Miles died, I had Typhoid fever. When we lived in Salt Lake City, my brother Sylvester, and I slept together.

One morning, the whole household was awakened by a knocking on the door (three knocks). Dad called out, 'Who's there?' The answer as three more knocks. Dad called but got no answer. Then he told my brother, Sylvester, to go see who was there. Sylvester slipped on his pants and went to the door. There was no one there, so he went around the house. There was not a soul in sight. There was nothing within 300 yards of the house that a person could hide behind. When Dad went to work, there was a message for him to call a certain party. He called and found out that Grandma was dead. As near as they could find out, she passed about the same time as we heard the knocks. [Emma Wilkinson Miles died on May 11, 1910.]

Dad was quite a heavy drinker at that time. I remember him coming home one time three sheets to the wind. He dropped in a chair and threw his derby hat on the floor. Pretty soon, the hat took off across the floor in first one direction and then the other. Dad sat with his mouth open and his eyes bulging. He had thrown his cat on my kitten. Dad wouldn't wear that hat any more.

We moved to Tremonton, Utah and spent a couple off years. Then we moved to Black Pine, Idaho [about 1915.]. Dad wanted to quit drinking, that was about the time prohibition came into law. I must have been about none years old. Dad sent a load of cedar posts to Tremonton with Bob Young and Sylvester to get all the whiskey it would buy. Bob and Sylvester didn't come back for several days and when they did, there wasn't a drink of whiskey left. 'Was there ever one mad Scotchman!'

When we moved to Black Pine, Dad homesteaded 320 acres of dry farm. There was one time I was going out with the horses, and I was coming back to the house with them when I saw a rattlesnake buzzing away in the sagebrush that was a little ways away from me. I stopped the horse, got off, and started throwing rocks at the snake. Pretty soon, the snake started towards me. You never saw a kid run so fast in your life. I used to get the horse up to a stump or something so I could get on it. The horse would put his head down, I would climb onto his neck, and then I would slide down to his back as he lifted his head. When the snake was chasing me, I made it to the horse's back in one leap. I still don't know how I got up there, and I don't know there the snake went.

The first time I remember seeing Dad in church was when he was set apart as Presiding Elder in the Buanna Branch. Dad had been married in the Salt Lake Temple twice [but had become inactive with a drinking problem.]

I was baptized in my 10th year [on July 2, 1916 by Samuel Mills and confirmed on the same day byElder Chas. R. Drumiles.] So many people moved out of the branch that it was discontinued and we had to go across the valley to the Black Pine Ward; it was seven miles from where we lived. Dad was inactive after the Buanna Branch was done away with till we moved to Holbrook, Idaho.

My older brother left home at 16 and lied about his age and joined the Army. He was going to fight Poncho Villa-he was the bad guy in Mexico at the time [about 1916].

Many a Sunday, Mother would get us out of bed early and start out walking to church. It was only 14 miles round trip. I have never been so tires and hungry as I was on Sundays.

We had to haul our water seven miles. We had to pay a nickel a barrel for the water. We had a nice fat pig ready to kill for our winter meat. I built a fire and got the

water hot to scald the pig. Dad went up to the pen to kill the pig and there laid the pig, dead. So we had no meat that winter.

One winter, we didn't have a bite in the house to eat. In family prayer that morning, Dad asked the Lord to provide for his family with enough groceries until the weather broke. Along about noon that day, a fellow camein there and said, 'Yesterday I slaughtered a pig. When I was cutting it up. I thought about you folks and I thought maybe you would like a piece of it.' he brought half a pig.

A little while later, another fellow came and brought two or three sacks of flour, and another fellow brought some spuds. This went on all day, until when the day was over, we had enough to get by quite well.

On my twelfth birthday, I walked about a mile to a neighbor's house to get some rivets to make a muzzle for my dog. There was an epidemic of rabies in the country that year. I had only been in the house a few minutes when a rabid coyote showed up. My dog fought with it. Dad shot the coyote, but he wouldn't shoot the dog. I couldn't do it either, so I had to get a neighbor to do it. The coyote followed me for about a mile.

When I was about 12 years old, we lived on a homestead in Idaho [Black Pine]. Wells were few and far between and were 350 to 400 feet deep, so it was very expensive to drill wells. The people that did have wells built water tanks or cisterns to store the water and sold the water for five cents a barrel. The barrels held 50 gallons of water. There were some springs on the west side of the valley which were seven miles from where we had our homestead. We had to haul water from one and a half to seven miles. If Charley Higley's cistern was full we would get it there. If not we had to go across the valley to some springs.

One day Mother and I had gone for water. For some reason, wee had a wagon without a box on it. It was called a running gear. I had a buckboard hooked on to the rear end of the running gear. Mother was in the buckboard and I had some barrels of water in the buckboard also.

An electrical storm came up with some rain. I was standing on the running gear of the wagon when a bolt of lightning hit. I saw sparks jumping all over the horses and harnesses. The next thing I knew, I was hitting the ground.

The horses took off on a run. They left the road and took off through the cedar trees. The trees were very thick. I jumped up and ran after the horses. They made a circle and I was able to grab one of the horses by the bit and stop them. How the horses got through the trees with the wagon I can't understand. The Lord must have had a hand in it.

Mother was sitting in the buggy as white as a sheet. When the lightning knocked me off the wagon she thought I was dead, and when I popped up around that tree and caught the horses, she thought she was seeing a ghost.

We went on home and every muscle in my body was twitching and they continued to twitch for many days after. I had a black mark about two inches wide from one shoulder to the opposite hip that stayed for a long time afterwards.

For years after that, every time we had an electrical storm my muscles would twitch and I couldn't do anything to control them. It would last until the storm was over.

However, I still like to watch lightning dancing around the skies. I have always felt it was the Lord that saved me from death or at least from being crippled for life.

The fall I was twelve, I ran away from home. [Lee did not get along very well with his father when he was drinking.] I went up in the Arbon Valley and worked in the harvest. Then I went to Uncle Joe Pratt's home in Bingham Canyon. I got a job driving team on a construction job. I got my foot under the wagon wheel and wound up with a broken foot. I went back home in about March. The folks were happy to see me, and I was happier to be home.

We let the horses roam the hills. I'd start out before sunup to look for them. If I was lucky I might find them by 8or 9 o'clock. It was more often before noon before I'd find their tracks and follow them round and around they would go. Sometimes they would be four or five miles from home. The bell horse would likely be in the shade of a cedar tree not even switching its tail for fear of ringing the bell. I believe I would have been a good tracker; I could look at a track and tell which horse it belonged to and how old the track was – that is if it was fresh or a day or two old.

Dad cut cedar posts for a living and got five cents for each top-grade post. Dad would cut posts and pile them in 5 – 10 or whatever was handy then tell me where they were and I would have to go and find them and haul them in. it was my job to go and gather up the posts and haul them to the house. At times, I would drive team for other people. Someone would want to take two loads of posts to Tremonton or Brigham City. They would drive one wagon and I would drive the other. I was paid 50 cents a day plus board.

One fall, I took a load of posts to Tremonton for Dad, and I sold them and bought flour and fruit. On the way home, I camped for the night. I made one big mistake, but it sure taught me a lesson. I learned to never make camp in a hollow. A cloud burst came that night and found me with my bed under the wagon. The water came down the barrow pit and I got wet. I crawled up in the wagon. The water got up to the wagon bed. The next morning I was shy one quilt and one horse collar. A friend came along with an extra horse, so I went on that day.

While I was camped for noon, a wagon came along with my horse collar hanging on the side. I got my collar and quilt back. When I got about six miles from home, I met Dad. The storm had been so bad that he had started out to look for me. The Lord surely looked after me that time. The flour sacks had got wet, but I don't believe that there was more than a pound of flour spoiled in any one sack.

One fall, I had a trap set by a large cedar tree. I felt sure I would catch a coyote in that trap. A few days later, I made my rounds around my traps. I found that I had a coyote, but it had got away. I crawled under the limbs of the tree and found the chain of my trap. The trap was behind the tree, so I grabbed the chain and pulled on it. it was stuck so I gave it a hard jerk. There was a commotion behind the tree. A paw missed my face. The trap had a wildcat in it and the cat had been hiding behind the tree.

We had a one room school house with the windows all on one side, with one teacher. It was about the end of the first World War. There was a German family of the Amish faith. As I remember, there was a pair of twins, a boy and girl, and at least one younger girl. They were all eight of ten years old and had never been to school. The only

thing that they could say that we could understand was ‘yaw!’ The girls wore long dresses that swished in the dirt. Their mother never did learn to speak English. Those kids graduated with the rest of us and they were very sharp. As the younger kids started school, the older ones had taught them English. Everyone carried a lunch. One might have a jam sandwich; another one might have Karo syrup; the next one might have a slab of meat; the next one might have a bean sandwich. During the holidays there might be a few pieces of cake or pie wrapped in newspaper.

Usually on a farm, the owner expected the hired hands to be out in the fields by sunup and to work there until sundown. There were also chores and other things to do when you got in. I worked with one farmer one time. I told him that if he could stand to put up with me for three days I was sure we would get along all right. I always had three days of bumblefooting around when I went to work for somebody.

I worked for a little while then the farmer went traveling and left me to work alone for a few days. I didn’t want him to think that I was laying down on the job, so I got up early in the morning. When the sun came up, I would be out in the fields working. I would take an hour and a half or something at noon for a bite to eat, and then I worked out in the field until sunset. After two or three days, the farmer came home. It was about sundown when I was getting ready to come in that I saw this farmer jumping up and down waving his hat. I waved at him to let him know that I had seen him. Then I went to the end of the field, unhooked the team, and went home.

When I got to the house, the farmer asked me what I was trying to do. He said that eight hours of working was enough for any man, and it was enough for his horses. So I didn’t work overtime after that. The farmer also commented that I didn’t even snoop in the dresser and other things in the house. I told him that there wasn’t anything of mine in the drawers. He was quite surprised at that, I guess.

We moved to Holbrook [Idaho] about 1922. Dad finally broke the habit and I never heard of him taking a drink again. My brother Walter told me that after I left home he used to drink Near Beer. ‘that was less than ½ of 1% alcohol’. I’m not sure, but I think I was ordained a Deacon after we moved to Holbrook. Dad started a blacksmith shop there. I worked with him for a couple of summers, then I went to work for a fellow in a garage. I used to get so interested in my work that I very often couldn’t tell you if I had eaten or not.

The road went from Brigham City northwest through Tremonton, Blue Creek Valley to Snowville, Utah west of Snowville to Strevell and Malton, Idaho and joined the Oregon Trail near Burley, Idaho. In good weather they would cut off trail about four miles west of Snowville and head for Sublet Pass and join the road north of Malta. That trail was worn down so that in many places the axle would drag, the ruts were so bad.

Very few hauled hay in those days. They would hobble their horses and turn them loose to graze. They always had a sack of oats or other grains to feed the horses morning, noon, and night. Some people had springs. There were a few ranches that had wells and some of them charged five cents a head to water horses. There was one rancher about ten miles out of Tremonton that charged cars five cents a bucket to fill their cars and water bags. Cars had a rough time in those ruts. They often drove in the range brush next to the road. Shovels were as important to the car as the crank. They were always getting stuck,

high-centered or cross-threaded in the ruts. The travelers depended to a big extent on jack rabbits for food. There was a lot of sage chickens in that country then. When they left their roosting ground in the morning, the sky would be almost like a cloud. The Government took care of them. In the early 1920's there was a plague of squirrels or what we called 'pot guts'. The Government had everyone they could get put out the poisoned grain. After about three years, the squirrels were thinned out, but the sage chicken was almost gone. The jack rabbits would get thicker each year. It seemed every seven years they would die off.

We had 80 acres of wheat. It was a beautiful crop; large full heads. Everyone that looked at it said if would produce between 30 and 40 bushels to the acre. The rabbits moved in for two nights and there wasn't a head left standing. They nipped the joints and took or slicked the juice.

Where they had water they put hay up in derrick stacks. In the winter the jacks would undermine the hay stacks in two nights so that the winds would tip them over. Sometimes the farmers were able to prop the stacks up. The farmers used what they called rabbit wire around the stacks but one rabbit would get in, then they were all in. Some farmers put rabbit wire around their whole 320 acres but the rabbits won most of the time.

A young fellow about my age came into the valley and we became very good friends. His name was Max Stohl. I had a Model T Ford that was stripped down to a couple of bucket seats and a windshield. About the middle of September, 1926, Max Stohl and I took off in my Ford for California. [Lee was 20 years old.] We slept out on the desert north of Twin Fallls, Idaho the first night. Max was cold-blooded, so he slept in all his clothes and in his overcoat. Sometime in the wee hours of the morning, he woke up hollering. hE said some varmint had bit him on the neck. I got some matches and had a look. Sure enough, he had a couple of specks of blood on his neck, but we couldn't find what had bit him. He refused to stay there any longer so we took off. A few days later, something bit him again. We got to looking things over and found one or two straight pins in the collar of his overcoat.

We stopped in Willows, California and worked in the rice. Then we went on to Los Angeles where my brother, Sylvester worked for the Los Angeles Railway. I worked there as night watchmen for six months and then went to Automotive School. After this we returned to Utah.

I went to Holbrook and worked with Dad and did some mechanical work. In the spring of 1926, I went to Seattle. I spent the summer there mixing mud for a plasterer.

I spent the winter of 1928 camped out in a cow hollow cutting posts. We ran out o grub and had to walk into Holbrook. We left camp as soon as we could see in the morning, and we never got home until 10:00 p.m. We had a blizzard the last few miles. I was so tired that I could hardly put one foot in front of the other. We had a good supper and went to bed. I got up int next morning and felt like a million bucks.

I think that spring was the first time that I saw my wife-to-be, that is to know who she was. She came in the store and I was there. She looked at me and turned beet red. We were married on May 11, 1932 in the Logan Temple, and we had four wonderful children."

Lee in wheelchair with Rex, Ruby and ReNae